

could understand their significance. He believed passionately that "racial equality in America started in the skies over Europe." He and two other Tuskegee Airmen were featured in the 2006 Documentary "On Freedom's Wings: Bound for Glory, the Legacy of the Tuskegee Airmen" which was sponsored by the Pennsylvania Veterans Museum in Media, PA. He also designed the plaque dedicated in memory of the Tuskegee Airmen in Arlington National Cemetery. In May 1995, he was selected by President Bill Clinton to represent the U.S. Air Force for the 50th Anniversary Celebration of VE Day, and he accompanied President Clinton and Vice-President Gore to Europe.

Captain Smith was a member of a unique group of men who possessed an unabashed devotion to this nation and a belief in the strength of American values, even at a time when their country's laws failed to reflect the values for which they fought.

On Friday, at 9:05 AM, the First Fighter Wing from Langley Air Force Base will offer the ultimate recognition of Captain Smith's service to this nation. Like Captain Smith, throughout its storied history, the U.S. Air Force First Fighter Wing has been a trailblazer—leading the way in bringing new fighters operational. Four F-15 fighter jets will fly over the internment services for Captain Smith. In the words of Captain Smith's son Gordon—"I would like to think that my Dad will be beaming with joy and appreciation."

To Captain Smith's widow, Lois G. Smith, his son Gordon and daughter Deborah, I offer this tribute. As this nation prepares to honor the memory of Martin Luther King, Jr. on Monday, it is fitting that we also honor the memory of Captain Luther H. Smith, Jr.—like Dr. King, a great American hero who fought to realize America's commitment to freedom for all.

31ST ANNUAL DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. MEMORIAL BREAKFAST

HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Madam Speaker, as we celebrate the birth of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and reflect on his life and work, we are reminded of the challenges that democracy poses to us and the delicate nature of liberty. Dr. King's life, and, unfortunately, his untimely death, reminds us that we must continually work to secure and protect our freedoms. Dr. King, in his courage to act, his willingness to meet challenges, and his ability to achieve, embodied all that is good and true in the battle for liberty.

The spirit of Dr. King lives on in the citizens of communities throughout our nation. It lives on in the people whose actions reflect the spirit of resolve and achievement that will help move our country into the future. In particular, several distinguished individuals from Indiana's First Congressional District will be recognized during the 31st Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast on Saturday, January 16, 2010, at the Genesis Convention Center in Gary, Indiana. The Gary Frontiers Service Club, which was founded in 1952, sponsors this annual breakfast.

This year, the Gary Frontiers Service Club will pay tribute to several local individuals who have for decades unselfishly contributed to improving the quality of life for the people of Gary. Those individuals who will be recognized as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Marchers at this year's breakfast include: Ms. Ella Bush, Ph.D., Mr. Charles Deggans, Mr. Arthur Hoyle, Reverend R.T. Mitchell, and Mr. Linus Scott. Additionally, our distinguished State Senator Earline Rogers and Ms. Era C. Twyman will be honored with the prestigious Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drum Major Award, an award given out annually to outstanding individuals of the Gary community, while Mr. Claude Powers will be recognized as the 2009 Frontier of the Year.

Though very different in nature, the achievement of all these individuals reflect many of the same attributes that Dr. King possessed, as well as the values he advocated. Like Dr. King, these individuals saw challenges and faced them with unwavering strength and determination. Each one of the honored guests' greatness has been found in their willingness to serve with "a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love." They set goals and work selflessly to make them a reality.

Madam Speaker, I urge you and my other distinguished colleagues to join me in commending the Gary Frontiers Service Club officers: President Oliver J. Gilliam, Vice President James Piggee, Secretary Melvin Ward, Financial Secretary Sam Frazier, and Treasurer/Seventh District Director Floyd Donaldson, as well as Breakfast Chairman Clorius L. Lay, Videographer Otho Lyles, Master of Ceremony Alfred Hammonds, the honorees, and all other members of the service club for their initiative, determination, and dedication to serving the people of Northwest Indiana.

HONORING MILTON VARDEMAN PADGETT

HON. TRAVIS W. CHILDERS

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Mr. CHILDERS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize the life of Milton Vardeman Padgett on the occasion of his 100th birthday. Vardeman was born January 13, 1910 in the Blackland community in Northeast Mississippi to John and Hulda Padgett.

At a young age, Vardeman fell in love with the game of basketball and played at Jumpertown. To this day, he enjoys watching basketball and has become a devoted fan of the Memphis Grizzlies. Vardeman worked as a carpenter for Fisher Aircraft in Memphis during WWII, but worked as a farmer throughout his life.

Vardeman married Margaret Geno Padgett and was a devoted husband for 65 years until her death in 1996. Mr. and Mrs. Padgett reared two children, Harrell Padgett and Janie Padgett McCall. He also has four grandchildren, nine great-grandchildren, and 11 great-great-grandchildren.

Vardeman still lives in his home in Jumpertown, Mississippi and is being cared for by his daughter Janie. He says his longevity in life is attributed to always honoring his father and mother. I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Mr. Vardeman Padgett on his 100th birthday.

RECOGNIZING STEPHEN LUCAS, DIRECTOR OF JAMES A. HALEY VETERANS' HOSPITAL AND CLINICS

HON. GUS M. BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Stephen Lucas, the director of the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital and Clinics in Tampa, Florida, who is retiring after a distinguished 37 years of federal and military service. As the director of Haley Veterans' Hospital, Mr. Lucas oversaw one of the largest veterans' health care systems in the United States, comprised of the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital and the associated outpatient clinics affiliated with the University of South Florida College of Medicine.

Mr. Lucas, a Navy veteran who served on the USS *Iwo Jima* and in Vietnam, began his VA career in 1974 and since has served at multiple VA medical centers across the United States. Mr. Lucas also worked in the private sector, including as the senior hospital consultant with Sun Health, Inc., as the director of management engineering at the Madisonville Regional Health Center in Kentucky, and at the Baton Rouge General Hospital in Louisiana.

During Mr. Lucas's tenure at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital, he received awards recognizing his significant achievements and leadership skills, including the 2009 Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence award. Additionally, during his tenure at the Miami VA Medical Center and Clinics, the Medical Center received the Secretary of Veterans' Affairs Robert W. Carey Performance Excellence Award for providing the highest quality of care, as well as the Governor's Sterling Award, which recognizes organizations that have achieved performance superiority within their establishment.

I also would like to recognize the contributions of Mr. Lucas's family, including his wife Sheri, his daughter Amanda and his two sons, Mathew and Thomas. The commitment by Mr. Lucas to the Haley Veterans' Hospital meant sacrifices from his family. Those sacrifices are highly appreciated by the veterans' community served by the hospital.

Madam Speaker, Mr. Lucas is a true American hero who should be recognized for his outstanding military service, as well as his exemplary career. Haley's Veterans' Hospital has truly been blessed to have such a worthy and honorable citizen as its director. I wish him well on his retirement.

TRIBUTE TO BUTLER COUNTY ON THEIR 200TH ANNIVERSARY

HON. ED WHITFIELD

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 13, 2010

Mr. WHITFIELD. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor Butler County in the First Congressional District of Kentucky on their 200th Anniversary. This momentous occasion not only celebrates the rich history of Butler County, but the many thousands of residents who